



FAQs About General Registrations & General Registration Plates

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV)

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FAQs About General Registrations & General Registration Plates

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV)

The RMV is often asked questions about Dealer, Repair, Farm, and other types of General Registration Plates. The questions usually relate to who can use the plates and whether the people that use them get special exemptions from taxes or registration fees. Here are some typical Questions and Answers which may be helpful. The questions and answers were prepared by the Legal Counsel's Office of the RMV to provide information of interest to general registration holders, law enforcement officers, insurance agents, members of the public and RMV employees. The responses are based upon a careful reading of the statutes and regulations and the inferences to be drawn from them.

1

I have seen lots of vehicles that have registration plates that say "Dealer" or "Repair" or "Farm." Why are these plates issued and who are they issued to?

A The RMV is authorized by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 90, Section 5 (M.G.L.c. 90, §5) to issue **General Registrations and General Registration Number Plates** to persons engaged in certain occupations who meet the eligibility requirements of the law and the Registrar's Regulations. There are currently seven (7) General Registration Plates that are issued: Dealer; Boat and Boat Trailer Dealer; Motorcycle Dealer; Repair; Farm; Owner-Contractor; and Transporter. **Only one (1) General Registration Plate needs to be attached to a vehicle.** Each plate has a large one-letter decal to the left of the registration number indicating the plate-type: Dealer Plates (**D**); Repair (**R**); Farm (**F**); Owner-Contractor (**C**); and Transporter (**T**). The color of the decal is changed yearly and is issued when the General Registration is renewed.

2

How does the business benefit by having one of these plates?

A A "General Registration" is an alternative to a "Commercial Registration." It is issued to businesses that qualify under Chapter 90, Section 5 of Massachusetts law because the needs of their particular type of business require a different method of registering their vehicles for business use. The motor vehicle registration needs of most businesses are served by the use of a "Commercial" registration plate. The Commercial plate (and most other types of plates) are issued by the Registrar and required to be attached to a specific vehicle with an identified vehicle identification number (VIN). The specific registration plate that is issued may only be attached to that specifically identified (and properly insured) vehicle, and no other. In fact, it is illegal to attach that registration plate to any other vehicle. The primary benefit of a General Registration Plate is that it does **not** have to be attached to any

one specific vehicle. Instead, because of the special needs of the qualifying registrant, **the general registration plate may be attached to any vehicle that the registrant owns (or in some cases only controls).** The types of businesses authorized by law to register their vehicles in this manner typically own (or control) more vehicles than are needed to be registered for business use at any one time. The registrant is issued a limited number of registration plates (each containing the registrant's specific registration number) which may be attached to a vehicle the business registrant owns, as needed. The registrant may attach the plate to any of its qualifying vehicles. Once the Plate is attached the vehicle will be considered officially registered and may be operated on public ways. Some examples:

- 1) a **motor vehicle dealer** may attach the Dealer Plate to any vehicle it owns and holds for sale in its inventory (an inventory vehicle does not include a vehicle used in the dealer's day-to-day operations), as needed, and the vehicle will be considered legally registered as long as the dealer has the required insurance coverage and is otherwise in compliance with the law;
- 2) a **farmer** may attach the Farm Plate to any motor vehicle or trailer principally used and dedicated to the farming activity. A farmer who has three (3) dedicated farm vehicles may not need more than one (1) Farm Plate if the three (3) vehicles will not be used simultaneously. So, a farmer who regularly uses a pick-up truck for farm chores can remove the Farm Plate and attach it to another dedicated farm vehicle when it is needed. It would be economically wasteful to register all three vehicles for the whole year if all three will not be operated at the same time. A passenger vehicle may not be used.
- 3) a **repairer** who runs a one-person repair shop may have a tow truck that tows large vehicles and a smaller "ramp" truck that carries a car after it is hauled up the "ramp." There is no need to register each vehicle with a "Commercial" plate if a **Repair Plate** can be attached to either vehicle when needed.

In order to be properly registered, every vehicle operated with a General Registration Number Plate must have sufficient insurance coverage to satisfy Massachusetts law. Instead of buying a policy of insurance for each specific vehicle, however, General Registrants buy a policy of insurance that covers **any of their vehicles operated with the assigned General Registration Number Plate.** In this way the registrant is not buying unnecessary insurance for a vehicle that may sit unused for significant periods.

3

What part of the Registry issues General Registration Plates?

A

The Section Five Division (named after the statutory provision that authorizes these plates - M.G.L. c.90, Section 5).

4

Who can apply for a General Registration Plate?

A

An applicant for a General Registration Plate must be **principally and substantially engaged** in the type of business for which the General Registration Plate is sought. Those occupations are: **Motor Vehicle Dealer; Repairer; Owner-Contractor; Recreational Vehicle and Recreational Trailer Dealer; Boat and Boat Trailer Dealer; Trailer Dealer; Transporter; and Manufacturer.** A **Farmer** need not be "principally" engaged in farming but must be "substantially" engaged in that activity.

5

Does a person who owns one of these types of businesses automatically qualify for a General Registration and Plate?

A

No. A person in one of these businesses needs to file an Application with the Section 5 Division of the RMV. The Section 5 Division will review the Application, any required license, and other relevant documents and then forward a request to the State Police that an Officer conduct a site visit of the business premises. The purpose of the visit is to assist the Registrar in determining if the applicant has: 1) suitable premises for the business; 2) suitable vehicles for the type of General Registration sought; 3) made representations in the Application which are not true; and 4) an actual **need** for one or more Plates.

6

Can the holder of a General Registration Plate "loan" it to someone else?

A

No. A General Registration plate holder is prohibited from loaning the plate that is registered with the RMV. As stated earlier, a General Registration Plate can only be placed on a qualifying vehicle owned (and in some cases controlled) by the registrant. A General Registration Plate holder **can loan its motor vehicle or trailer with the General Registration Plate attached** but, by law, it cannot do so for more than five (5) consecutive days. For example, a **dealer** can loan a dealer-owned vehicle to a customer, with the Dealer Plate attached, for demonstration or sale related purposes, but the vehicle (with the attached Dealer Plate) cannot be loaned for more than five (5) consecutive days. A General Registration plate holder who "loans" the plate for use by another person on a vehicle not owned by the registrant is violating the law. A violation of these restrictions can result in a suspension or revocation of the General Registration and Plate.

7

Do vehicles being operated with General Registration Plates have to pass a yearly inspection?

A

All vehicles displaying a General Registration Number Plate need to be inspected **except** dealer-owned inventory-vehicles and manufacturer-owned vehicles that display "Dealer" plates. Dealer-owned vehicles, once sold to a retail purchaser, will have to be inspected within seven (7) days of the sale date. Manufacturer-owned vehicles which are issued "Dealer" plates and are operated for sale and demonstration-related purposes in connection with the manufacturer's obligation to its dealer network in Massachusetts, will need to be inspected following sale to the ultimate purchaser. Although a dealer-plated vehicle need not have a current inspection sticker, the vehicle must comply with all equipment requirements and may be cited for a violation.

8

Is it true that General Registration Plate holders have to display proof that they paid sales tax and a Title Fee?

A Most General Registration holders have to display proof of payment of sales tax and Title Fee. The proof required to be displayed is called a **Compliance Decal** and must be attached to the registrant's vehicle. No **Decal** can be issued if the owner's registration is in "non-renewal" status for non-payment of excise tax or parking tickets or a reinstatement fee from a prior suspension is due. **Some types of registrants or vehicles are exempt from the decal requirement.** The requirement does not apply to motor vehicles and trailers owned by a dealer and held for demonstration or sale purposes; motor vehicles or trailers controlled, but not owned by a repairer that are being operated or towed solely for repair, testing, alteration, or equipping, or transportation incidental thereto; trailers owned by a dealer of recreational or boat trailers and held for sale or demonstration; motor vehicles operated by a transporter or trailers towed by a transporter; and motor vehicles or trailers classified as implements of husbandry in Chapter 90D, §1 and exempt from sales tax by Chapter 64.

9

I have seen lime-green registration plates on a dealer's lot that say "Massachusetts Temporary Plate" and they have an expiration date in big print. What kind of plate is this?

A What you saw is a temporary General Registration Plate made of paper and plastic. It is issued when a General Registration Plate is reported lost or stolen and an immediate replacement is needed. These temporary plates are issued with a 12-day expiration date because the RMV will manufacture and ship a replacement plate in a brief turn-around period. The General Registrant must return the temporary plate to the RMV when the replacement plate is received.

10

Does a person have to have a Dealer License to apply for a Dealer Plate?

A Yes. Dealer Plates can only be issued to a person who is **licensed as a dealer** by the city or town in which his or her business is located. There are three (3) license classes.

(i) A **Class 1 Motor Vehicle Dealer** must have a written contract with a recognized manufacturer of motor vehicles to sell the manufacturer's **new vehicles** as the dealer's principal business. The purchase and sale of used motor vehicles must be incidental to the new vehicle business.

(ii) A **Class 2 Dealer** is a person whose principal business is the buying and selling of **used vehicles**.

(iii) A **Class 3 Dealer** is a person whose principal business is the buying of used motor vehicles for the purpose of remodeling, taking apart or rebuilding and selling the vehicles, or who buys or sell parts of used vehicles, including tires, or assembles used motor vehicle parts. A Class 3 licensee is classified as a **"junk"** dealer and the premises may be regulated by state law and city or town ordinances or by-laws.

11

Are Dealer Plates only issued to dealers of Motor Vehicles?

A No. **Dealer Plates** are issued to **Motor Vehicle Dealers, Recreational Vehicle Dealers, Recreational Trailer Dealers, Boat Trailer Dealers and Trailer Dealers**. **Manufacturers** are currently issued **Dealer Plates** to allow the manufacturer's representatives to demonstrate its vehicles at the various dealerships and to potential customers. Motorcycle dealers are issued smaller scale Dealer Plates that contain the lettering **M/C Dealer**.

12

Can a dealer take a vehicle off the lot and use it for "personal use" with a Dealer Plate?

A Yes. The following described individuals, **and only these individuals**, may use a vehicle for **personal use** that is owned by a motor vehicle dealership and has the assigned Dealer Plate attached:

1) the dealer; 2) the spouse of the dealer; 3) a co-owner of the dealership(a person who holds at least a 40 percent proprietary interest in the dealership); **4) the spouse of a co-owner; and, 5) an employee who works at least 20 hours per week as a salesperson for the dealer**. **No other person**, including other relatives of the dealer, other

dealership employees, or bona fide customers, may operate a dealer owned motor vehicle with a Dealer Plate attached, **except for demonstration or sale related purposes**.

13

Can a dealer put a Dealer Plate on a tow truck or other vehicle used in the day-to-day operations of the dealer's business?

A No. A dealership cannot use a vehicle with a Dealer Plate attached as equipment utilized in the day-to-day operation of the business, such as a **'tow truck,' 'courtesy bus,'** or a **'parts' or 'service vehicle.'** Such a vehicle would have to be registered as a "commercial vehicle," or a "livery vehicle" for a courtesy bus designed to carry 15 or fewer passengers. The **only exception** to this is that the dealer may attach the Dealer Plate to a vehicle owned by the dealer for the purposes of removing snow from the business property. The vehicle may not be used for plowing for compensation.

14

How can I tell if a vehicle being operated with a Dealer Plate is actually owned by a dealership?

A When a vehicle is being operated with a Dealer Plate the customary informational sales stickers must be attached (usually on a rear side window). Such stickers are normally required on passenger vehicles, sport utility vehicles and pickup trucks. A **used motor vehicle** must have the federally-required **"Used Car Buyer's Guide"**-(FTC sticker informs a potential purchaser of the warranty protection that accompanies the sale of the used vehicle by that dealer); and the state-required **"Used Vehicle Warranty Law"** sticker- (informs a consumer of their rights under the state warranty law). A **new motor vehicle** must have the federally-required **"Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price"** label -(lists the suggested price, options, fuel economy, etc); and the state-required **"New and Lease Car Warranty Law"** sticker - (provides information on a purchaser's new vehicle warranty rights under state law).

15

Does a dealer avoid paying registration fees and taxes by using a Dealer Plate?

A No. Every Massachusetts dealer who is issued a General Registration and Plate must **annually** pay a fee of \$100 for the Registration Certificate and \$20 for each Registration Plate that is issued. A dealer with 10 plates pays a registration fee of \$300 each year. Motor Vehicle dealers **are also subject to an alternative Excise Tax** that is assessed by the city or town where the dealership is located. Prior to mid-1998, dealers could apply for an exemption from excise taxes but if they did, they could not use an inventory-vehicle for personal use without being fined and having to pay the excise tax. Since M.G.L. c.60A, §1 was amended in 1998, dealers are no longer exempt and must pay the alternative tax assessed by each city and town. The tax is \$100 for every Dealer Plate that is issued to its licensed dealers. A dealer with 10 Plates will be assessed \$1,000 by the city or town for the privilege of the registration. Note that **dealers are also assessed a Use Tax** by the Department of Revenue for the personal use of dealer-owned inventory vehicles that are operated prior to ultimate sale to the purchaser. Since dealers are now subject to the alternative excise tax, the Registrar permits dealers and the other individuals authorized by c.60A, §1 to use a dealer's inventory-vehicle for personal use.

16

I have a small part-time business selling boat trailers from my apartment. Buyers approach me over the Internet and I order the trailer directly from the factory and have them ship it to the customer. Can I obtain Dealer Plates?

A No. All retail dealers of boat trailers (or any other dealer) cannot be issued Dealer Plates unless the dealer is **principally and substantially engaged** in the particular business; has suitable premises to conduct the business (which must include an office for the maintenance of records of sales); is separated from any other business not owned by the dealer; has an area to display the motor vehicles, boats or trailers offered for sale, and displays a permanently affixed exterior sign to give the general public notice of the name and nature of the business. You are not **principally and substantially engaged** in the business if it is operated on a part-time basis. You also appear to lack the required facilities.

Motorcycle Dealer Plates

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Who can get a Motorcycle Dealer's Plate?

A Motorcycle dealer's are required to obtain a license from the city or town where their business is located. They must qualify under the same criteria applicable to a motor vehicle dealer, since a motorcycle is defined as a motor vehicle. A motorcycle dealer also applies for a Motorcycle Dealer Plate in the same manner as a motor vehicle dealer.

18

Last week I saw an automobile with a very small license plate attached that had a number (with a letter) and the bottom of the Plate said "M/C Dealer." I assume this is a Motorcycle Dealer Plate. Can this type of Plate be attached to a car?

A Yes. A motorcycle dealer whose inventory includes an automobile or pick-up truck may attach a motorcycle-sized Dealer Plate to the larger vehicle when it is being operated for demonstration or sale-related purposes. Similarly, a Class 1 or Class 2 motor vehicle dealer whose inventory includes a motorcycle may attach a standard-sized Dealer Plate to the motorcycle when it is being operated for demonstration or sale-related purposes.

19

Who can get a Repair Plate?

A Repair Plates are issued to businesses that repair, alter, recondition, equip or tow motor vehicles or trailers for the public and who maintain a place of business as required by law.

20

Can a repair shop attach its Repair Plate only to a tow truck?

A No. In addition to a tow truck or ramp truck, a Repair Plate can be attached to any motor vehicle, including a trailer or a tractor-trailer combination. A Repairer cannot use a Repair plate for a demonstration drive on a vehicle it has for sale.

21

Can a tow truck with a Repair Plate tow a vehicle that is unregistered?

A Yes. State law and regulations of the Registrar allow a tow truck to tow an unregistered vehicle if the tow truck is properly registered (operating on a valid Repair Plate and the Compliance Decal is properly displayed) and the repairer has insurance coverage that protects both the towing vehicle and the vehicle being towed. Note that a tow truck with a "Commercial" registration cannot tow an unregistered vehicle unless there is a Repair Plate attached to the vehicle being towed.

22

Does a vehicle owned by a repairer have to have the repair shop's name on it?

A Yes. Any vehicle owned by a repairer and used primarily in the repairer's business must display the business name and municipality on the vehicle. The identification must be in permanent lettering, at least 1^{1/2}" in size, and be plainly visible from each side or from the front and rear of the vehicle. The lettering must be on every vehicle owned by the repairer and used with the Repair Plate, including tow trucks and service vehicles. Signage is not required on: 1) a motor vehicle purchased by the repairer that is classified as a total loss salvage motor vehicle (see c.90D, §1) and is being transported for purchase, sale, repair or testing and the repairer carries a bill of sale or salvage title for the vehicle; or 2) a motor vehicle purchased by the repairer and being operated within 10 days of purchase and the operator has a bill of sale, seller's assigned Certificate of Title or the receipt for the repairer's Application for a Certificate of Title. The repairer-owned vehicle must also display the required Compliance Decal.

23

Can a repairer attach its Repair Plate to a customer's vehicle?

A Yes. A repairer can use its Repair Plate on a customer's vehicle for the purpose of repairing, altering, equipping or reconditioning the vehicle or transportation incidental thereto, but the repairer cannot use the customer's vehicle for commuting or for the repairer's personal use. Only the repairer (or an agent of the repairer) may operate the customer's vehicle with the Repair Plate attached. The repairer may **not** permit the customer to operate the customer's own vehicle with the Repair Plate.

Repair Plates

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Can a vehicle owned by a repairer and operated with a Repair Plate be used for personal use by the repairer?

A A repairer may only use a vehicle with a “repair” plate attached for personal use when the vehicle is: 1) **owned by the repairer**; 2) **primarily used in the repairer’s business**; 3) **displays the valid Compliance Decal**-(see the answer to Q # 26); and 4) **properly displays the repairer’s name and the municipality of the repair shop**. Use of the vehicle for a commercial use unrelated to the repairer’s business is not authorized.

25

Can a repairer operate a snow plow with the Repair Plate attached?

A Yes, but only if the vehicle is: 1) owned by the repairer; 2) used **primarily** in the repairer’s business; 3) displays the valid Compliance Decal; 4) properly displays the name and municipality of the repair shop and the use is limited to removing snow from the business property. The vehicle may not be used for plowing for compensation.

26

Does a repairer avoid paying registration fees and taxes by using a Repair Plate?

A No. Like other Section 5 registrants, a repairer must pay an annual fee of \$100 for the Registration Certificate and \$20 for each Repair Plate. A repairer is also subject to the Excise Tax of \$25 per thousand dollars of valuation for each vehicle it owns and must pay a sales tax when purchasing the vehicle and a Title Fee upon registration. The Registrar will not issue a Repair Plate until the repairer has provided satisfactory evidence that it (or the company it is leasing the vehicle from) has paid the 5 % sales tax and the \$50 Title Fee for all the vehicles it owns which will be operated on the Repair Plate. The Registrar will then issue a **Compliance Decal** for each separate vehicle. The decal identifies each vehicle by its Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and the repairer’s General Registration Number, and the decal contains a serial number. This decal must be affixed to a window of the vehicle behind the driver and facing outward. If there is no such window the Decal must be placed on the rear of the vehicle as close to the registration plate as possible. **Compliance with the decal requirement is a condition of registration and a vehicle lacking a required decal will be deemed unregistered, in violation of M.G.L. c. 90, §9.**

27

Who can get an Owner-Contractor Plate?

A There are several types of businesses that can be issued an Owner-Contractor Plate:

1) An Owner-Contractor Plate can be issued to a business that owns a fleet of at least 10 or more motor vehicles, trailers, mobile construction cranes or combinations of any of these. To qualify the applicant must have at least one piece of "special mobile equipment" (a vehicle principally designed to conduct excavations or lift building materials at public or private construction sites, is operated on a way for the sole purpose of getting to and from the site, and has a gross vehicle weight of at least 12,000 lbs). The owner-contractor must maintain facilities for the repair, alteration or equipping of the vehicles or equipment it owns. The facilities must be in a permanent building capable of admitting most of the registrant's vehicles and it must contain the tools and equipment necessary to make needed repairs and alterations. The business must be separate from any business not owned by the registrant.

2) An Owner-Contractor Plate can be issued to a business that leases for hire so called "storage" or "mobile office" trailers. The business must have at least ten trailers.

3) An Owner-Contractor Plate can also be issued to a business that rents or leases motor vehicles or trailers to the general public. The business must own at least 20 such vehicles. Only the owner or owner's agent may operate the vehicles with the Owner-Contractor Plate attached, and only for repair, alteration, maintenance, delivery, disposal or retrieval of the vehicle.

4) An Owner-Contractor Plate may be issued to a business that engages in the short-term renting or leasing of specialized motor vehicles or trailers to the general public, that are designed for use in construction, if the business owns at least 20 specialized motor vehicles or trailers.

Note: An Owner-Contractor registration plate is appropriate for a backhoe, or other rubber-tired piece of "special mobile equipment" that does not actually perform any work on a public way and the vehicle is only used at a closed construction site. That is why use of the plate is limited for **the sole purpose of transporting the vehicle to or from a public or private construction site**. However, a **commercial registration plate** is required for the same type of vehicle **if the construction site itself is a public way**.

28

Can an owner-contractor attach the Owner-Contractor Plate to any vehicle it owns?

A No. The Owner-Contractor Plate cannot be attached to a vehicle that is designed to carry passengers or any load on a public way. For example, pick-up trucks and dump trucks cannot be used with the Owner-Contractor Plate. Only vehicles displaying a valid **Compliance Decal** may be operated with the Owner-Contractor Plate.

29

Can an owner-contractor plow snow in a vehicle operated with the Owner-Contractor Plate?

A Yes. An owner-contractor may plow snow on a public way in a vehicle operated with the Owner-Contractor plate, **but only if the vehicle is "special mobile equipment."** As described earlier, special mobile equipment is a vehicle principally designed to conduct excavations or lift building materials at public or private construction sites and has a gross vehicle weight of at least 12,000 lbs. A road grader or rubber-tired bucket loader meeting the weight requirement may be used, **but not a dump truck.**

30

Does an owner-contractor avoid paying registration fees and taxes by using an Owner-Contractor Plate?

A No. Like other Section 5 registrants, an owner-contractor must pay an annual fee of \$100 for the Registration Certificate and \$20 for each Owner-Contractor Plate. An owner-contractor is also subject to the Excise Tax of \$25 per thousand dollars of valuation for each vehicle it owns and must pay a 5 % sales tax when purchasing the vehicle and pay a \$50 Title Fee upon registration. The Registrar will not issue an Owner-Contractor Plate until the owner-contractor has provided satisfactory evidence that it (or the company it is leasing the vehicle from) has paid the sales tax and Title Fee for each vehicle it owns which will be operated with the Owner-Contractor Plate. The Registrar will then issue a **Compliance Decal** for each separate vehicle. The decal identifies each vehicle by its Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and the assigned General Registration Number and the decal contains a serial number. This decal must be affixed to a window of the vehicle behind the driver and facing the outside. If there is no such window the Decal must be placed on the rear of the vehicle as close to the registration plate as possible. **Compliance with the decal requirement is a condition of registration and a vehicle lacking a required decal will be deemed unregistered, in violation of M.G.L. c. 90, §9.**

31

I have a very large back yard and plant tomatoes and carrots every year in my garden. Can I get Farm Plates?

A Probably not. To obtain a Farm Plate an applicant must be **substantially engaged in the occupation of farming** as defined in Chapter 90, §1 **or the growing and harvesting of forest products or incidental lumbering operations**, must be a Massachusetts resident or corporation and must hold any license or permit required by law. After 1997, all new applicants for Farm Plates must have a minimum of five acres for a farm or 10 acres for forest products and lumbering operations. There are also income producing requirements.

32

Are there any requirements for farm vehicles?

A Yes. A farmer must own a fleet of two or more motor vehicles or trailers principally used and dedicated to conducting the farming activity, **excluding passenger vehicles**. The family sedan cannot be operated with a Farm Plate.

33

Can a vehicle owned by a farmer and operated with a Farm Plate be used for personal use by the farmer?

A A "farm" plate may only be attached to a motor vehicle or trailer if the vehicle is:
1) owned by the farmer; 2) principally used and dedicated to the farming activity; 3) displays the valid Compliance Decal; and 4) is not a passenger vehicle. If the vehicle meets this criteria then personal use of the vehicle is acceptable, except that a commercial use unrelated to the farming activity is not authorized.

34

Does a farmer avoid paying registration fees and taxes by using a Farm Plate?

A No. Like other Section 5 registrants, a farmer must pay an annual fee of \$100 for the Registration Certificate and \$20 for each Farm Plate. State law **does** allow a farmer to obtain an exemption from the Excise Tax by filing an application for exemption with the local tax assessor. Farmers must pay a 5 % sales tax when purchasing a vehicle and pay a \$50 Title Fee upon registration. When the farmer provides evidence that the sales tax and Title Fee has been paid, the Registrar will issue a Compliance Decal for each separate vehicle. The decal identifies each vehicle by its Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and the farmer's assigned General Registration Number and the decal contains a serial number. This decal must be affixed to a window of the vehicle behind the driver and facing the outside. If there is no such window the Decal must be placed on the rear of the vehicle as close to the registration plate as possible. **Compliance with the decal requirement is a condition of registration and a vehicle lacking a required decal will be deemed unregistered, in violation of M.G.L. c. 90, §9.** Certain pieces of equipment called "implements of husbandry" are exempt from the sales tax and Title Fee and Compliance Decal requirements. These are vehicles which are designed and adapted primarily for agricultural, horticultural or livestock raising operations or for lifting or carrying an implement of husbandry. (Examples are: a hay wagon, a baler and a manure spreader).

35

What is a transporter?

A A transporter is someone principally and substantially engaged in the business of transporting or delivering vehicles not owned by the transporter. This can include someone transporting motor vehicles (under their own power) or trailers under a contract. **A transporter for hire** must obtain a license from the Department of Telecommunications and Energy. Transporter Plates are also issued to motor vehicle and other finance entities, (including banks) who are licensed to engage in the financing of vehicles or vehicle insurance and whose employees or agents (including a reposessor) may seize the vehicles for non payment.

36

How Does the Registrar assign General Registration Plate Numbers?

A Each registrant is assigned one basic registration number, such as **Dealer 123**. The first plate issued to the dealer is **123A**. Each additional plate that is issued to that dealer (based upon demonstrated need) carries the next letter of the alphabet, until **123Z** is issued. If a large dealership needs more plates the RMV will issue **123AA** through **123 ZZ**.

37

How does the RMV ensure that plate holders are using the plates responsibly and not just handing them out to friends and relatives?

A All plate holders are aware that it is their responsibility to provide security for the plates issued to them and to be able to account for them when required by the Registrar. An RMV Compliance Officer conducts site visits of the business premises, from time to time, conducts an audit of the plates that have been issued and reviews records reporting plates as lost or stolen. If the audit finds discrepancies in security or accounting, the plate holder is scheduled for a Hearing to determine whether the General Registration and General Registration Number Plates should be suspended or revoked. State Police also conduct spot checks to determine compliance. Any plate holder found to be loaning plates will likely have their General Registration suspended or revoked.

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How does the Registrar keep track of all the various registrants and their business locations?

A As stated earlier, the Section 5 Division at the RMV's Boston Headquarters is charged with the responsibility of issuing and overseeing General Registration Plates. The Registrar is assisted by a unit of the Massachusetts State Police which does a site inspection (see the answer to Q # 5) when an applicant applies for the initial General Registration or for additional plates. The State Police and local police may also conduct site visits of existing plate holders to determine if the holder continues to qualify for the General Registration (e.g., maintaining required facilities and/or equipment or required records according to law) and whether the holder is using the plates on qualified vehicles. If the State Police or local police believe that a registrant no longer qualifies for the General Registration or they observe a violation of RMV Rules or Regulations, they may inform the Registrar of their findings.

39

What can the Registrar do to the holder of a General Registration Plate who misuses the plate or otherwise violates this registration law?

A When the Registrar has reason to believe (often obtained from State Police or local police) that a registrant no longer qualifies or has committed violations of Chapter 90, Section 5 or the Rules and Regulations adopted by the Registrar, he may contact and invite the registrant to discuss the allegations at a RMV pre-hearing conference. (The Registrar has established Rules and Regulations at 540 CMR (Code of Massachusetts Regulations) 18.00). Some problems may be resolved through the registrant's willingness to take corrective actions. Others may be more serious and require the Registrar to hold a Hearing. At the Hearing, the registrant will have an opportunity to be represented by legal counsel and present witnesses and other evidence. Following the Hearing, the Registrar may suspend or revoke any General Registration Plate(s) if he finds the holder has violated the provisions of Chapter 90, §5 or the Rules and Regulations of the RMV. Note also that a State or local police officer may issue a Citation for a motor vehicle violation. Any criminal violations are prosecuted by the State Police or local police.

40

Does the Registrar take information only from the State Police and local police about misuse of General Registration Plates or can a citizen send a complaint?

A The Registrar encourages members of the public who believe they have witnessed misuse of a General Registration Plate to contact the **RMV Section 5 Division at (617) 351-9272**. You can also send a written complaint to the: **Section 5 Division, RMV, P.O. Box 199172, Boston, MA 02119**. You may also e-mail the information to the RMV at www.mass.gov/rmv. Please indicate in the text that you are complaining about a General Registration or General Registration Number Plate. The RMV will look into the allegations to determine if further action is warranted and may contact you if additional information is necessary. Please identify the plate type and registration number and letter.